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Asking Mr. Smith About Mr. Smith

As to whether the United States ought to sell Sabrejets for \$10,000 each to Tito, Americans might have different ideas.

Some may say, with the advocates of the sale, that it is better to supply Tito than to have Yugoslavia turn to Moscow.

Others will say that we're silly to send jets to Tito when all he does is to criticize us and preach destruction of our system. Let him turn to Moscow, they say.

Still others will ask, as we do, that if we cease to lend, give or sell Tito goods including military hardware, what proof is there that he will turn to Moscow? What makes anyone so certain that our giving or not giving him aid will make him want to return to the Soviet orbit and take orders from Khrushchev?

But almost everyone, however he may feel about the matter, ought to question the manner in which the decision was made, if Messrs. Allen and Scott had all their facts straight in their column on this page the other day.

What they say is that the chief advocate is William P. Bundy, deputy assistant secretary of defense, the only official who took part in the decision of both administrations to sell Tito the jets. Mr. Bundy recommended the course both times.

And on what ground did Mr. Bundy twice recommend the sale? On a highly secret Central Intelligence Agency estimate. The CIA intelligence estimate was prepared by Mr. William P. Bundy when he served as a top official in that agency.

Now Mr. Bundy may be 100 per cent correct in his estimation of the Yugoslavian situation. But with all the resources Uncle Sam has at his command, it seems hardly sensible not to have a double-check system going in Washington.

After all, isn't this exactly as though a defendant named Smith stepped down from the stand then stepped up again to be sworn as his own character witness?

One could hardly expect Mr. Smith not to say a good word for himself.

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